captured by our enemy.

At best, unions blunt the edge of workers' struggles and recuperate them back onto "legal" (read: bourgeois) terrain. At worst, they are the direct and most efficient enforcers of attacks on our living standards. How many strikes are killed before they ever began, only for raises below inflation and cuts to benefits to be rushed through "negotiating" over the heads of workers? Negotiating against the working class as to how much they are to lose, more like. How often is it that the unions limit when and how to strike based on legal restrictions? The unions depend on this framework, they operate on ground alien to our struggle.

Opposed to the charades of workers' "representation," self-organization is the struggle of the workers themselves, based on their real demands and real capacity to fight. Fighting on our own terrain opens up a whole avenue of new tactics. Instead of having to wait years for the collective bargaining agreement to elapse, organized workers can strike on a dime against fresh assaults on their living conditions. Workers at a restaurant can, if banded together, threaten a strike against sexual harassment from the manager, win, and be still ready for tomorrow's battle. The raises won two years ago to combat inflation will no longer jeopardize the demands for protection from the next economic crisis. The point is to keep the initiative always in the hands of the workers.

With self-organization, the strike itself becomes a much more dynamic and powerful tool of struggle. Most strikes today are guided by what is legal, or worse, what is safe. This must change so that strikes are defined by the real balance of forces of classes. How to direct the strike can become something decided upon by the workers themselves, after taking into account just how much they can get away with and what is most effective. This can be completely mundane, such as, during a strike at a library, having your family and friends check out the maximum number of books and return them all at once to swamp management, or extreme such as sabotaging the subway system during a mass strike of hundreds of thousands.

What does self-organization lead to?

Since the success of a self-organized struggle depends on the collective power and strength of the workers, what becomes critical is that our class is able to struggle beyond sectoral divisions. It is not sufficient that the teachers organize as teachers, the gig-workers as gig-workers, the laborers as laborers, the bartenders as bartenders, and so on. The unions thrive on this division, with some workplaces having over four different unions, but the working class does not. Not only does our power grow exponentially once different workers of a single workplace unite (the cashiers and the janitors, the masons and the roofers), but we find its ultimate expression in the struggle as a class. Each strike brings out demands that are shared widely amongst our class, and also the potential for it to blossom beyond any one workplace. Workers everywhere are being attacked by the same crisis, workers everywhere should therefore fight back as one.

The generalization of the struggle beyond sectoral divisions would open up new political possibilities, as shown by the history of our class. The highest points of the working class's political independence from the capitalist class, where a new historical agenda could be posed, corresponded with mass generalized movements. From strike committees to regional workers' councils, struggles took on a political character against the capitalist system. No longer a defensive reaction to the constant ways the standards of living are eroded, the working class struggle shifted to an offensive in the fight for a new system free of class oppression.

For those of us who believe that battling symptoms is not a cure, who recognize that fundamental, revolutionary change is the only true escape from the predicament we find ourselves in, and who find only the class-conscious proletariat capable of making that change, self-organization is of utmost importance. The working class's historic mission is to overturn this capitalist system by taking power and installing a classless, moneyless society, communism. This can only be done through the proletariat's mass action, ultimately a movement of billions. The connection between this future revolutionary action and the need for self-organization today should be clear enough.

We must keep in mind that the proletariat self-organizing its struggle, while necessary, is not sufficient to get out of this mess. Equally needed for our defensive struggles to be transformed into an offensive struggle against the capitalist class and its state is a political reference point and leadership formed on the basis of revolutionary politics. An international party of the proletariat that can have deep roots within the class struggle will be able to directly politicize the mass movement and sharpen it so that the blade is aimed at the heart of the capitalist system.

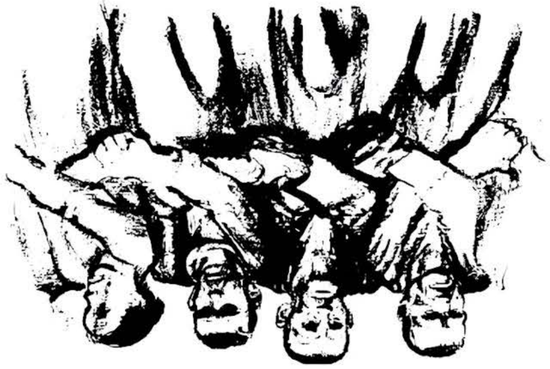
It is a long road to there from here, and we are aware that the workers who take up struggle by their own actions will face many difficulties. This does not make that step any less necessary. If you broadly agree with what you've read so far, and are interested in intervening within the wider class struggle, consider reaching out.

—Internationalist Workers' Group
May Day 2025

CONTACT US:

•us@leftcom.org (US)
•uk@leftcom.org (UK)
•ca@leftcom.org (Canada)

The only Way Out: Your Own Strength!



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On this international day of the working class, it should not be a groundbreaking revelation that we are (and have been) facing a drastic attack on our living standards. Inflation, speed-ups, rent hikes, tariffs, deportations, a possible recession, and the threat of war all make us wonder if we are able to carry on this way.

But what do we do? The answer, obviously, is not individual. You can't negotiate with your boss one-on-one to do away with the systemic pressures bearing down on our class. The answer, then, lies in the collective struggle of the working class. A new problem arises: if things are so bad, where is this mass working class struggle? Why is the working class, on the whole, so passive? This line of questioning leads us to the ICT's position that the working class, as of now, is fighting the capitalist class in their own game. It must instead rediscover and invent its own proper tools for class struggle, the working class's self-organization built on its own strength outside of and beyond control of the unions.

What is self-organization?

The term may seem abstract, but for us self-organization simply refers to the struggle against the capitalist class as coordinated by the workers themselves, rather than this task being delegated to some corporate body that claims to represent them. Because it's such a broad term, self-organization varies greatly in both form and scope. Historic examples range from mass assemblies and strike committees that organized specific struggles to councils or soviets that ran the political and economic affairs of revolutions.

Why these organizations are so important will be discussed later, but for now it is critical to note that the foundations of self-organization are not far-fetched- they are present in the current conditions of the life of our class. At our interventions in strikes, we have often encountered militant workplaces full of workers with different ideas of how to win the strike. What was typically lacking was their coordination and organization to actually change the strike's course.

The first steps can be extremely simple. Creating an email chain or group chat of your coworkers. Meeting at a café before work or at a bar after work. Instead of marching back and forth on the picket line for hours while waiting for word from the union rep, take some time to discuss strike tactics. What is important is to open up a space where workers can rely on their own strength and act accordingly.

Why is self-organization so preferential?

We argue that self-organization is the only way the proletariat can adequately fight back against the capitalist class. It unlocks a whole new terrain for a struggle as a class, allowing for new militant tactics, overcoming sectoral divisions, and transforming a purely economic struggle into a political struggle.

The workers' struggle is dominated by the trade unions, permanent organizations designed to negotiate wages, benefits, working conditions, in effect, how our ability to work is sold to the capitalists. Though the unions were once defensive organizations of the working class, they are now bound by a thousand ties to the state and its legal apparatus due to their permanent nature. In a word, they've been